

Boot Camp-NASA Style

Story by Beth Nischik

Photos by James Blair

It's early in the morning on the Gilruth Center's soccer field. A small group has gathered there in the dark. They're waiting to sweat during the Gilruth's unique physical fitness class.

The idea behind the class is simple: Provide a complete workout encompassing all parts of the body. Yet the workout is anything but simple. The class is run boot-camp style, complete with several miles of running, as well as push-ups, sit-ups and jumping jacks. And that's all within the first 30 minutes of class.

Shannon Gaspard, an astronaut strength conditioning rehab specialist at Johnson Space Center, started the class this past spring. It was so popular a second class was offered this summer. Both classes met for six weeks. Participants showed up twice a week at 5:45 a.m. to give it their all.

The idea for this type of class came from an already established astronaut course in which every new astronaut class goes through a "boot camp," working out every day for two weeks. The class for the astronauts involves not only calisthenics but also the opportunity to work together as a team.

Gaspard wanted to make a boot camp available to JSC employees so everyone can enjoy the benefits. While the class competes with other military-style workouts in the Houston area, Gaspard is proud that the JSC program is different than others. "The style of training is not your military style torment," Gaspard said. "There's nothing to break down and build back up. This class is for fitness and health."

While there are team punishments, there are also team incentives. "During my workouts," she said, "I like to be encouraging but not degrading."

A third class will be offered in the fall. All participants are required to pass a medical examination or have a doctor's approval. Gaspard does not recommend this class for people who have problems running because it is a core element of the class.

For additional information on this and other exercise classes being offered, call the Gilruth at x33345. ♦

The Gilruth Center's newest class is not for the weak of body or mind. At right, Ray Scarborough assists Ed Robertson during the wheel barrow exercise. Below, instructor Shannon Gaspard leads jumping jacks. In the bottom photo, Krystal Haddock fights to complete an arm and leg lift exercise.

